

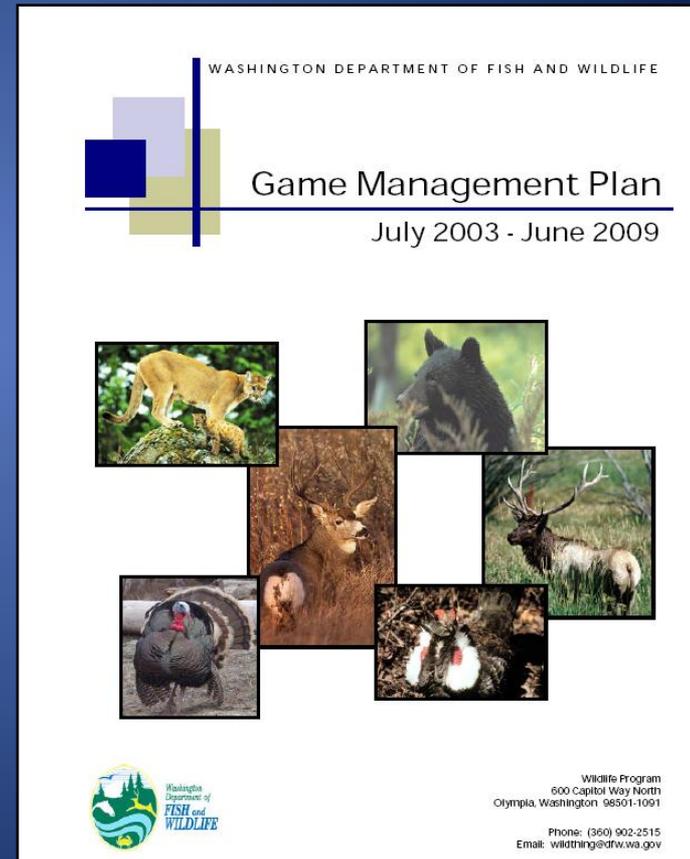
# 2015-21 Game Management Plan Briefing and Public Hearing

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# Update Process

- Scoping
- SEPA Process SEIS
- Draft Update
  - Public Review
- Final Draft SEIS
- Commission Approval of the Plan



# SEIS and Plan Adoption Process

- SEIS will be completed this month
- The Game Mgmt Planning Document is still open to amendment
- WDFW continue to edit the document
- Commission adopts the Plan

# Drafting an Updated Plan for 2015-21

- Removed items that had been completed
- Removed items that were no longer priorities
- Addressed issues from the scoping process
- Conducted a general public opinion survey
- Drafted the updated plan and sent out for public review

# Scoping

- Started with Agency Staff and GMAC to develop ideas
- Public Internet Survey
  - We received survey responses from 8057 individuals
  - We also had over 5000 respondents provide thousands of individual comments

# Top Responses

1. Predator Impacts (5066)
2. Wolf ungulate conflict mgmt (3763)
3. Wolf depredation on livestock and pets (3495)
4. Wolf livestock conflict mgmt (3444)
5. Combined Length of Elk Season (3303)
6. Tribal hunting issues (3282)
7. Special permit drawing odds (3216)
8. Restore pronghorn (3114)

# Top Responses

9. Access and fees on timberlands (2795)
10. Game population status info (2691)
11. Cougar population size (2660)
12. Equipment and technology (2572)
13. Hunter access policies (2534)
14. Restore depleted bighorn herds (2498)
15. Hunter access funding (2492)
16. Develop a moose pop estimate for NE (2476)

# Top Responses

17. Length of deer seasons (2357)
18. Baiting (2319)
19. ATVs (2259)
20. Harvest Information (2188)
21. Hoof Disease (2129)
22. Road Mgmt (2103)
23. Any buck general seasons for mule deer (2093)
24. Expand waterfowl harvest opportunities (2084)

# Draft our Updated Plan for 2015-21

- Removed items that had been completed
- Removed items that were no longer priorities
- Added issues from the scoping process
- Conducted a general public opinion survey
- Drafted the updated plan and sent out for public review

# Public Opinion Survey

- Survey of general public on issues
- Hunter survey – satisfaction levels
- Used along with other methods of collecting public opinion

# General Public Opinion Survey

- Relative support for hunting
  - Reasons for opposition
- Wildlife Conflict – new program for WL
  - Black bears
- Predator Management
- Wolf Management
- Participation in outdoor recreation – 3R
  - Hunting participation

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Support for Hunting

- The majority of Washington Residents support hunting – 2014 88%
- Relative levels of support varied by the reason
  - Highest for preventing spread of disease - 90%
  - Prevent damage to habitat – 78%
  - Lowest to prevent auto collisions – 60%

# General Public Opinion Survey Wildlife Conflict

- Over a quarter of Washington Citizens reported having a conflict w/wildlife in the past two years (29%)
- About 17% of those contacted WDFW
  - Over 300,000 contacts
- Rating of WDFW response:
  - 51% good or excellent and 6% poor
  - 33% don't know and 71% had little knowledge

# General Public Opinion Survey Wildlife Conflict – Black Bears

- Bears were the third highest reported conflict (after deer and raccoons)
- Garbage/Structural Damage/Trees and Gardens
- Limited support for killing black bears due to timber damage
  - Hunters preferred way of addressing

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Predator Management

- Strong support (70%) for maintaining sustainable predator populations
- Strong support (71%) for reducing predator populations to increase suppressed deer or elk herds
- Strong support (68%) for reducing predators to protect listed species
- Split for (48% support/39% oppose) preventing loss of domestic animals

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Wolf Management

- There is good support for wolf recovery (64% support vs 27% oppose)
- There is even better support for delisting wolves once they meet recovery objectives (73% vs 15%)
- The public is not sure how to rate WDFW's management of wolves
- Cost/share funding of prevention (61% vs 26%)
- Lethal control to protect livestock (63% vs 28%)
- Lethal control to protect ungulates (55% vs 32%)

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Wolf Management

- Concern about impacts after recovery:
  - Elk populations (58%)
  - Livestock (71%)
- Hunting after recovery:
  - Support establishing a hunting season (63% vs 28%)
  - To maintain wolf population objectives (69% vs 23%)
  - To provide recreation (38% vs 53%)
  - To address impacts to prey (61% vs 29%)
  - To address livestock attacks (65% vs 25%)

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Participation in Outdoors

- A majority of Washington residents enjoy the outdoors with:
  - 57% hiking
  - 47% wildlife viewing
  - 45% camping
  - 42% fishing
- Over three quarters (77%) indicate recreating on state lands in the past two years
- A third (35%) reported hunting at some time in their lives

# General Public Opinion Survey

## Participation in Outdoors

- Interest in Hunting:
  - 48% said not interested
  - 13% might consider it
  - 20% are current hunters
  - 13% hunted in the past, but no longer

# Drafting an Updated Plan for 2015-21

- Removed items that had been completed
- Removed items that were no longer priorities
- Added issues from the scoping process
- Conducted a general public opinion survey
- **Drafted the updated plan and sent out for public review**

# Major Issues

- Predator/Prey Mgmt
- Wolf Management
- Recruit, Retain, Re-activate Hunters
- Non-toxic Ammunition
- Hunter Access



# Major Issues

- Wildlife-Human Conflict
- Disease – Hoof Disease
- Baiting of Deer and Elk
- Hunting Equipment
- Pronghorn



# Predator/Prey Management

- Documented Impacts from Predators
- Process to Consider Action
- Action Plan Elements
- Outreach
- Monitor Effectiveness



# Wolf Management

- Implement the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan
  - Livestock conflicts
  - At risk ungulate populations
  - Down list or delist as appropriate
- Develop a wolf management plan for when wolves are no longer listed

# Hunter Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation

- Develop a working group
- Workshop on programs from across the nation
- Expand on ideas and set priorities
- Develop and implement a plan



# Non-Toxic Ammunition

- Develop voluntary programs
- Work with hunters on regulations in areas or situations where lead is problematic
- Expand outreach regarding the issue



# Hunter Access

- Outreach
- Funding
- Couple with conflict resolution
- Develop greater incentives for landowners
- Inventory landlocked public lands
- Improve the Reservation System



# Wildlife Conflict

- Complete transition to Wildlife Program
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Consistent with population objectives
- Proactive program emphasizing non-lethal techniques
- Develop more permanent solutions
- Partnerships with others



# Disease in Wildlife

- Hoof Disease
- Hair Slip
- EHD
- Pneumonia
- Others



# Baiting of Deer and Elk

- Social call
- Identify concerns
- Determine specific area of support
- Draft a rule that is supported by a majority of hunters



# Equipment/Technology Ethics

- Retractable broadheads
- Expanded use of crossbows
- Air rifles for small game hunting
- Review pistol requirements
- Others



# Draft SEIS Public Comment

- We received well over 1600 communications: email, surveys completion, and letters
- With over 4000 categories of comments

# Draft SEIS Public Comment

- Issues receiving most interest included:
  - Predator-prey management
  - Wolf management
  - Recruitment, retention, and reactivation
  - Non-toxic ammunition
  - Hunter access
  - Wildlife conflict
  - Elk and deer
  - Bear and cougar

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Predator-Prey Management

- Let nature takes its course, predators cannot over populate if they don't have the prey available
- Predators have their own place in the ecosystem and do not need management
- Consider predator effects on trophic cascades before reducing their numbers

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Predator-Prey Management

- The guidelines are too restrictive and would not result in any actions being taken
- If there were fewer predators, there would be more prey for humans
- We should be able to reduce predator numbers before prey numbers decline
- You can't take humans out of the equation there are 7 million in this state, wildlife needs to be managed

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Wolf Management

- Wolves are not game species and don't belong in the game management plan
- It is too early to be talking about a plan for managing wolves after they are de-listed; it will take years for that to occur
- Placing wolves in the game mgmt plan shows that WDFW plans to allow hunting

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Wolf Management

- A plan for managing wolves after they reach recovery objectives should have been completed already
- Given the controversy associated with wolves, starting a plan now makes sense

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Recruitment, Retention, and Re-activation

- Concerned that this is just a means to increase revenue to WDFW
- We don't need hunting, let nature take its course
- If you want more hunters than just increase the amount of game animals and hunter success

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Recruitment, Retention, and Re-activation

- Lower the price of licenses and hunter numbers will increase
- Increase the number of nature watchers not hunters
- Find other ways to support the Department
- Various ideas to help with the recruitment

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Non-toxic Ammunition

- Eliminate lead ammunition now, it is toxic and kills or poisons wildlife
- Many provided examples of the toxicity of lead to wildlife and humans
- Population level impacts should be documented prior to restrictions
- Document problems before creating restrictions

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Hunter Access

- By far the greatest concern was the fee access issues in western Washington associated with industrial timberlands
- There was a lot of support and suggestions for how to address the access issue

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Wildlife Conflict

- The greatest concern was bear damage issues with industrial timberlands
- Again, there were many suggestions for how to improve the conflict program
- The use of non-lethal measures was popular

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Elk and Deer

- Concern about predation effects was a common comment
- Improvement of surveys and population monitoring was also commonly stated
- Lots of comments related to hunting season regulations
- Hoof disease concerns

# Public Comment-Major Themes

## Cougar and Bear

- Again, concern about predator numbers and effects on prey was a common comment
- Support for considering prey population levels in managing predator population levels
- Many suggestions for expanding harvest to benefit prey
- Many suggestions about hunting season regulations, usually to liberalize harvest

# Summary

- More work to be done in editing the plan based on comments received
- Final SEIS including response to comments will be completed later this month
- Final draft of the plan will be submitted to the Commission by the end of the year
- There will be overlap of completing the Plan with the 2015-17 hunting season process.

# Questions???

